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RR RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHJA #0318/01 0560103
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 250103Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1574
INFO RUEHZA/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS COLL
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3600
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE ALSO FOR EAP/MTS AND OES
COMMERCE FOR NOAA
USAID FOR RDMA/BANGKOK AND ANE
NSC FOR HAROLD VARMUS AND CEQ

E.O. 12598: N/A
TAGS: [SENV](#) [KGHG](#) [EAID](#) [AORC](#) [EFIS](#) [PREL](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: WE CAN COOPERATE, INDONESIANS TELL U.S. CLIMATE ENVOY

REF: JAKARTA 0266

11. (SBU) Summary: Special Envoy on Climate Change Todd Stern reassured senior Indonesian officials that the United States will be "ready" for Copenhagen. They welcomed U.S. leadership on climate change under President Obama and offered to help the USG in any way possible, including as an intermediary with countries like India and China. Closer to home, they expressed concern about climate change impacts on oceans and archipelagic countries like Indonesia. They were enthusiastic about U.S.-Indonesia cooperation on ocean issues, particularly marine research, and invited Stern to the World Ocean Conference. Stern signaled U.S. willingness to consider financing mechanisms for avoided deforestation, as well as greater science and technology cooperation to build Indonesian capacity for climate change adaptation. End Summary.

Flexibility, not Orthodoxy Needed in Climate Talks

12. (SBU) Dr. Emil Salim, Indonesia's elder statesman on environmental issues, and Agus Purnomo, Head of the National Climate Change Council Secretariat, said that they have been "waiting" for U.S. leadership on climate change. During a meeting in Jakarta on February 19, Stern reassured them that the U.S. would be ready and willing to reach a strong and robust agreement in Copenhagen. Purnomo warmly welcomed Stern's statement that the Administration views climate change as a matter of serious importance and urgency, and that negotiations and agreements had to be guided by science. Dr. Salim and Purnomo appreciated Stern's comments that despite fears about the global economy, the important point is that current economic woes should not impede movement to a greener economy; rather it should help catalyze this shift.

13. (SBU) Responding to a question from Purnomo, Stern said that the U.S. is open to different base years (instead of 1990) against which to measure commitments and actions. The important thing, Stern emphasized, is that all parties should avoid a doctrinal stance; instead of sticking to orthodoxies that have failed us in the past, we need creativity and flexibility to achieve a meaningful post-Kyoto agreement. This is important not only when discussing developing country positions, but also understanding the U.S. position. If Congress does not pass comprehensive domestic climate change legislation before December, other countries should be pragmatic and realize that any agreement at COP-15 has to be one acceptable to Congress.

14. (SBU) Salim and Purnomo affirmed the need for pragmatism and flexibility. They agreed with Stern's assessment that many countries are unwilling to commit internationally to less than what they are in fact willing to take action on domestically. A global

agreement should motivate countries to take action, not deter action. Communicating effectively with countries like China and India (the "framing" or "packaging" of expectations regarding major developing countries' actions/commitments) is vital to a comprehensive, successful agreement.

Palatable Major Economy Commitments: "Packaging" Key

15. (SBU) Stern emphasized that while not all developing countries' actions will be controversial, actions or commitments by major developing economies will be a real issue for Copenhagen. He welcomed suggestions on how to package or frame issues in a way palatable to China, India and other major developing economies. Purnomo frankly admitted that China and India seem to take different positions at different times. He thinks they are willing to take action but hesitant to state commitments out of fear they will be pushed into a corner during UNFCCC negotiations. Indonesia can help with the "packaging", he said.

16. (U) Salim and Purnomo wanted to clarify that the USG does not expect developed and developing countries to take on comparable commitments. Stern responded to Salim's reiteration that climate actions by Indonesia should not sacrifice economic development by noting that the world needs to make the shift from high to low-carbon growth, where change is a driver of economic growth. This should be viewed as an opportunity, not an obstacle. Salim and Purnomo did not indicate what Indonesia could commit to but said "we want to act". Salim hinted at resource constraints to taking domestic actions.

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Ocean and Climate: Serious Indonesian Concern

17. (U) Stern recognized Indonesia's particular concerns about climate change impacts on the ocean. Climate change is matter of survival for Indonesia, Dr. Salim emphasized, as sea level rise threatens to submerge thousands of Indonesia's islands. He and Purnomo talked of the impact rising sea temperatures and coral bleaching will have on the fisheries that support millions of Indonesian livelihoods. Dr. Widi Pratikto, Secretary General of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, who also attended the meeting, invited Stern and a high-level USG delegation to the World Ocean Conference (WOC) and Coral Triangle Initiative Summit that Indonesia is hosting this May in Manado (reftel). (Note: The Indonesians specifically mentioned again their interest in participation from new NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco. End Note) The WOC will focus attention on the relationship between the ocean and climate change, and culminate in the issuance of the Manado Ocean Declaration by marine/fisheries and environment ministers from around the world.

18. (U) Dr. Widi expressed Indonesian commitment to a long-term cooperative partnership between the USG and Indonesia on research and capacity building for marine conservation, fisheries management, and climate change adaptation. He highlighted the extensive cooperation that his ministry has had with USAID and NOAA, and emphasized Indonesia's desire to continue (and expand) this cooperation.

Avoided Deforestation: Flexibility Needed, at First

19. (SBU) Special Envoy Stern also informed Dr. Boen Purnama (another participant and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Forestry) that the USG is very sympathetic to Indonesia's position on avoided deforestation. The USG is open to discussing reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD), but there are outstanding methodological issues and uncertainties that need to be clarified. In response, Agus Purnomo urged flexibility on REDD, as trials are conducted, adjustments made, so that countries like Indonesia can begin to tap at least voluntary and regional markets before every single issue is resolved -- something that could take a very long time.

Indonesia is now in the process of getting its domestic REDD regime ready, he said (in time for the Bonn climate talks this June).

¶10. (U) Dr. Boen emphasized Indonesia's leadership on forestry issues. Indonesia is focused on the linkage between sustainable forest management and climate change, he said. He noted that President Yudhoyono launched the Forest Eleven (F-11) forum of countries with large tropical forests, but these countries are still discussing respective positions. Dr. Boen pointed out that he is the current chair of the U.N. Forum on Forest (UNFF). Its 8th session in New York this April is focusing on forest financing mechanisms and strategies, and forests and climate change. A successful outcome of UNFF-8 is important to the U.S., and will build more momentum for the run up to Copenhagen.

Working with Indonesia: Yes, We Can

¶11. (SBU) Dr. Salim and Agus Purnomo were eager to offer assistance to the USG to reach an agreement in Copenhagen, including as an intermediary with developing countries like India and China. "Anything we can do to help, we will" they said, offering to host special discussions during the World Ocean Conference, or even to convene a climate summit in the U.S. prior to Copenhagen. Special Envoy Stern welcomed their willingness to be a constructive partner.

In particular, he said he was open to any suggestions about how to package developing country commitments. Indonesia can help, he said, because Indonesians understand the urgency of taking action and know that we are all in this together. Indonesia can help other developing countries be flexible and creative in seeking a global climate change agreement.

S&T Cooperation: Building Vital Indonesian Capacity

¶12. (U) When asked about Indonesia's needs to face the challenge of climate change, the Indonesian officials emphatically agreed that increased science and technology cooperation is vital for building

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Indonesian scientific capacity, particularly capacity for marine science and climate change adaptation. They expressed interest in joint research with NOAA's premier research ship, the Okeanos Explorer. They emphasized marine and forest science related to climate change impacts, and measuring and studying greenhouse gas emissions, sequestration, and capture. We need further help on capacity to continue improving REDD, they said, including assistance on a REDD baseline, a national carbon accounting system, and educational programs for Indonesian scientists.

¶13. (U) Special Envoy Todd Stern has cleared this message.

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